

OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED USE OF THE PLENARY POWERS TO
SUPPRESS THE GENERIC NAME "IPHIS" MEIGEN, 1800, FOR
THE PURPOSE OF VALIDATING THE GENERIC NAME "IPHIS"
LEACH, 1817 (CLASS CRUSTACEA, ORDER DECAPODA)

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(For the application submitted in this case, see pages
79—81 of the present Volume)

(Letter dated 16th February 1944, endorsed by letter dated
10th December 1954)

I am writing in reply to your letter concerning the generic name *Iphis* Meigen, 1800. This name is an isogenotypic synonym of *Dolichopus* Latreille, 1796. The bibliographical data are as follows :

Dolichopus Latreille, 1796, *Précis Caract. Ins.* : 159. Genotype, *Musca unguolata* L., by designation of Latreille, 1810, *Consid. gén. Anim. Crust. Arach. Ins.* : 443.

Iphis Meigen, 1800, *Nouvelle classification* : 27. Genotype, *Musca unguolata* L., by designation of Coquillett, 1910, *Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus.* 37 : 555.

To the best of my knowledge, *Iphis* Meigen has always been treated, when its zoological position was mentioned, as a synonym of *Dolichopus*. There seems to be no possibility that it will ever come into use in the Diptera, since this would require either the discovery that *Dolichopus* was a homonym or that the genotype of *Iphis* is incorrect and that the true genotype is not congeneric with *Dolichopus*. Neither of these contingencies seems at all probable.

In spite of the fact that *Iphis* Meigen is invalid, although available, I should not like to see the name suppressed by the Commission. The basic principles of the International Rules are weakened every time an exception is made by official action, and I think that the Plenary Powers should be invoked only in the very few cases where the name to be saved is of extreme importance. The easiest and surest way of maintaining the prestige of the International Rules is by strict impartiality of application, and such prestige should not be endangered because of a relatively unimportant name in Crustacea. A number of names have been accepted as unavailable because they proved to be homonyms of earlier names that are not in use. If the Commission makes an exception here it opens the gate for more and more changes of this sort, until nomenclature will not be a matter of following rules, but of attempting to weigh rather unpredictable opinion.

I might add that the Commission is going to be subject to considerable pressure to suspend various of the Meigen 1800 names in spite of *Opinion* 28 and the recent reaffirmation of this *Opinion*. If the Commission intends to adhere to these *Opinions*, an exception made with one name, even though seemingly fostering stability, will weaken its stand. It will be far easier to adhere strictly to the Rules than to justify partial adherence.

The situation then is this. As far as *Iphis* is concerned, it affects the dipterists not at all, but does affect workers with Crustacea. In saving the name for the Crustacea, all zoology will lose, since the principles of zoological nomenclature will be weakened, and every name that has been changed in similar circumstances will be subject to uncertainty.